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California State Senate

SENATOR
BILL MORROW
THIRTY-EIGHTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT



0466
SEP 07 1999

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Lester A. Snow
Executive Director
CalFed Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

Following is a copy of the comments that were delivered orally on my behalf at the CalFed public hearing September 1 in San Diego. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Remarks for CalFed Public Hearing in San Diego

Senator Morrow appreciates the hard work that has gone into CalFed's draft EIS and recognizes that CalFed represents our best opportunity to craft a plan that provides a reliable supply of high-quality water for California's cities and farms.

However, the plan presented in the draft EIS falls short of achieving this very important goal because it emphasizes environmental ends over water supply objectives.

This is not to say that restoration of the Bay-Delta ecosystem is unimportant. The Bay-Delta is the most significant estuary on the West Coast and it needs to be restored as a healthy habitat for wildlife. Ecosystem restoration also is essential because otherwise drinking water supplies will continue to be threatened by regulators who attempt to solve environmental problems by reducing water diversions from the Delta.

CalFed already has acquired significant funding for its ecosystem restoration program and, in fact, has taken several actions to get the program under way. But the environment is only one part of CalFed's sweeping charge.

CalFed also appears to be emphasizing the environment elsewhere in its program. For example, its water supply and water quality programs rely heavily on "solutions" that do not require new infrastructure—something that appears to be anathema to the environmental organizations.

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For at least the first seven years, the CalFed plan depends almost entirely on water conservation and recycling to make water supplies for cities and farms more reliable. Southern California is a national leader in efficient water use. But while such programs reduce the future need for Bay-Delta water, they alone cannot improve the quality and reliability of drinking water from the system.

Construction of increased storage capacity is necessary to accomplish water quality and reliability objectives. Additional storage also will help to open the market for water transfers and manage the Bay-Delta system in a way that benefits fisheries.

Given this emphasis on the environment over water supply, it is indeed ironic that CalFed appears poised to ask water providers—and, ultimately, water users—to foot much of the initial \$5.2 billion bill for its plan. We must ask, What will we in Southern California receive for our undoubtedly considerable contribution to the CalFed plan? Are we getting our money's worth?

CalFed needs to address this in its final EIS. It must develop a finance plan that establishes an explicit connection between the benefits that water-users receive and the money they pay. Along these same lines, CalFed needs to provide firm assurances that its plan will be carried out in a balanced and equitable manner.

On Senators Morrow's behalf, I thank you for this opportunity to comment on CalFed's draft EIS.